

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claims 1 - 11 (cancelled).

1        12. (currently amended) A machine for making a  
2 nonwoven web comprising successively from top to bottom:  
3            a cooling assembly for cooling extruded filaments to  
4 form cooled filaments,  
5            a drawing assembly with fluid jet devices providing  
6 air flow for drawing the cooled filaments, said drawing  
7 assembly including a vertical drawing slot having an  
8 inlet opening, an outlet opening and a constant  
9 horizontal cross-section through which filaments pass  
10 with air to form a laterally extending curtain of drawn  
11 filaments, said drawing slot being formed by laterally  
12 extending spaced-apart walls terminating at the outlet  
13 opening ~~and being free of setbacks adjacent the outlet~~  
14 opening, said drawing slot having a ~~sufficient~~ lateral  
15 extent to receive said curtain of drawn filaments,  
16            a diffuser having an inlet zone including a diffuser  
17 inlet opening having a ~~sufficient~~ lateral extent to  
18 receive said curtain of drawn filaments and being  
19 connected to a diffuser outlet zone including a diffuser  
20 outlet opening, said diffuser including a divergent

21 nozzle and an electrostatically charging rail for opening  
22 drawn filaments which pass therethrough to form opened  
23 filaments, said divergent nozzle being formed by fixed  
24 diverging walls terminating at said diffuser outlet  
25 opening, and

26 a receiving belt for receiving said opened  
27 filaments, said diffuser outlet opening being spaced from  
28 said belt to form a receiving belt spacing,

29 wherein an air flow slot is formed between the  
30 drawing assembly outlet opening and the diffuser inlet  
31 opening for delivery of a flow of air onto said filaments  
32 along the entire lateral extents of the openings, said  
33 air flow slot opening to ambient air for intake of air by  
34 a venturi effect produced in the divergent nozzle by air  
35 passing therethrough with said drawn filaments, and

36 said receiving belt spacing being open to the  
37 ambient air.

1 13. (previously presented) The machine of claim 12,  
2 wherein said air flow slot delivers said flow of air at  
3 said drawing slot outlet opening to reduce the air speed  
4 and the speed of the passing filaments.

1 14. (previously presented) The machine of claim 13,  
2 wherein a second air flow slot remote of said first-  
3 mentioned air flow slot extends through said diffuser and

4        opens into said divergent nozzle for injection therein of  
5        air by venturi effect produced in the divergent nozzle by  
6        air passing therethrough with said drawn filaments.

1            15. (previously presented) The machine of claim 14,  
2        wherein said air flow slots take in air by venturi effect  
3        only.

1            16. (previously presented) The machine of claim 15,  
2        wherein said rail is located between said divergent  
3        nozzle and said receiving belt.

1            17. (previously presented) The machine of claim 12,  
2        wherein said rail is located upstream from said divergent  
3        nozzle.

1            18. (previously presented) The machine of claim 17,  
2        wherein said convergent and divergent nozzles are  
3        connected by a rectilinear slot.

1            19. (previously presented) The machine of claim 18,  
2        wherein said rail is located in said rectilinear slot.

1            20. (previously presented) A machine for making a  
2        nonwoven web comprising:

3           a drawing assembly for drawing filaments which pass  
4         therethrough with air to form drawn filaments,  
5           a diffuser having an inlet zone formed by a  
6         convergent nozzle and a divergent nozzle connected to  
7         said convergent nozzle for opening drawn filaments which  
8         pass therethrough into opened filaments,  
9           a rail for electrostatically charging said opened  
10      filaments to form charged filaments, and  
11          a receiving belt for receiving said charged  
12      filaments,  
13          wherein a slot is formed in the divergent nozzle for  
14        delivery of a flow of air onto said filaments, said slot  
15        opening to ambient air for intake of air by a venturi  
16        effect produced in the divergent nozzle by air passing  
17        therethrough with said drawn filaments, and  
18          said convergent and divergent nozzles slow the  
19        passing filaments to enhance spreading of the filaments  
20        by said electrostatically charging and thereby  
21        cooperatively obtain an improved spreading of the  
22        filaments and a reduced rebound phenomena of filaments on  
23        said receiving belt.

1           21. (previously presented) The machine of claim 20,  
2        wherein a second slot remote of said first-mentioned slot  
3        is formed between said drawing assembly and said diffuser  
4        for delivery of a flow of air into said filaments, said

5 slots opening to the ambient air for intake of air by a  
6 venturi effect produced in the divergent nozzle by air  
7 passing therethrough with said drawn filaments.

1           22. (previously presented) The machine of claim 21,  
2 wherein said drawing assembly includes a drawing slot  
3 outlet from which the drawn filaments are emitted, said  
4 drawn filaments being received in said diffuser inlet  
5 zone, and said second slot delivers said flow of air at  
6 said drawing slot outlet to reduce the air speed and the  
7 speed of the passing filaments.

1           23. (previously presented) The machine of claim 22,  
2 wherein said slots take in air by venturi effect only.

1           24. (previously presented) The machine of claim 21,  
2 wherein said rail is located between said divergent  
3 nozzle and said receiving belt.

25. (cancelled).

1           26. (currently amended) A machine for making a  
2 nonwoven web comprising successively from top to bottom:  
3           a cooling assembly for cooling extruded filaments to  
4 form cooled filaments,

5           a drawing assembly with fluid jet devices providing  
6   air flow for drawing the cooled filaments, said drawing  
7   assembly including a vertical drawing slot having an  
8   inlet opening and an outlet opening through which  
9   filaments pass with air to form a laterally extending  
10  curtain of drawn filaments, said drawing slot being  
11  formed by laterally extending spaced-apart walls  
12  terminating at the outlet opening ~~and being free of~~  
13  ~~setbacks adjacent the outlet opening~~, said drawing slot  
14  having a ~~sufficient~~ lateral extent to receive said  
15  curtain of drawn filaments,

16        a diffuser having an inlet zone including a diffuser  
17  inlet opening having a ~~sufficient~~ lateral extent to  
18  receive said curtain of drawn filaments and being  
19  connected to a diffuser outlet zone including a diffuser  
20  outlet opening, said diffuser including a divergent  
21  nozzle and an electrostatically charging rail for opening  
22  drawn filaments which pass therethrough to form opened  
23  filaments, said divergent nozzle being formed by  
24  diverging walls terminating at said diffuser outlet  
25  opening, and

26        a receiving belt for receiving said opened  
27  filaments, said diffuser outlet opening being spaced from  
28  said belt to form a receiving belt spacing,

29        wherein an air flow slot is formed between the  
30  drawing assembly outlet opening and the diffuser inlet

31 opening for delivery of a flow of air onto said filaments  
32 along the entire lateral extents of the openings, said  
33 air flow slot opening to ambient air for intake of air by  
34 a venturi effect produced in the divergent nozzle by air  
35 passing therethrough with said drawn filaments, and  
36       said receiving belt spacing being open to the  
37 ambient air.